

the following Centrally Sponsored Schemes during the Eighth Plan to promote marine fishing:-

- (i) Development of coastal marine fisheries comprising the components viz. (a) Motorisation of Traditional Craft Introduction of Plywood Craft and (c) Introduction of intermediate type of craft for offshore pelagic fishing.
- (ii) Reimbursement of Central Excise Duty on HSD oil supplied to mechanised fishing vessels below 20 metre length.
- (iii) Enforcement of Marine Fishing Regulation Act and Introduction of Artificial Reefs and Sea Farming Project.
- (iv) Scheme for development of Fishery Harbours (major and minor ports) and Fish Landing Centres.
- (v) Development of model fishermen villages, group accident insurance and savings-cum-relief under the scheme on 'National Welfare of Fishermen'.

(c) and (d) Ninth Plan Schemes have not yet been finalised.

Open Market Quota of Sugar

2626. SHRI R. SAMBASIVA RAO : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government of Andhra Pradesh has urged the Union Government to issue orders allowing the sugar factories to raise their open market sales in view of the bad fiscal position of the sugar industry in the State;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) and (b) In February, 1997 a request was received from the Government of Andhra Pradesh for release of additional free sale sugar to six cooperative sugar mills of the State identified by the High Level Restructuring Committee appointed by the Government of Andhra Pradesh to improve the financial position of these sugar mills. Besides, it was also requested that free sale sugar release may be increased in case of five units of Public Sector Company Nizam Sugars Ltd. so as to liquidate the cane price arrears to the cane growers as the Company was facing severe liquidity crunch.

(c) The Government have set up a Committee in the Ministry of Food, to consider such requests with specific guidelines and based on its recommendations, the release orders for additional quantities were issued to three units of cooperative sector and all the five units of Public sector in the month of February, 1997. Since the remaining three units of Cooperative sector had

already been allowed additional quantities within a period of three months they did not qualify for further release in the month of February, 1997 in view of the above guidelines.

Wheat Stock in States

2627. SHRI SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI : Will the Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) whether the failure of FCI to send the wheat from the Northern States to the wheat deficient areas is a major factor in its current scarcity;

(b) whether the nation has been forced to take recourse to the imports to combat the soaring prices of wheat whereas a little less than half of the nation's wheat stocks are lying in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether 30% of the country's total wheat stocks are still held up in Punjab, where the same has to be stored in the open for the lack of storage space;

(d) whether the Government have conducted any inquiry on the failure of the Food Corporation of India to send wheat to the deficient States;

(e) if so; the outcome thereof; and

(f) the steps being taken by the Government in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) to (c) In the current year, wheat despatches ex-North during April '96 to February '97 have been 40% higher as compared to April, 95 to February, 96. The decision to import wheat was taken not on account of hold up of wheat stocks in Punjab, Haryana and U.P., but to augment the overall stocks, which had become inadequate due to less production and consequent lesser procurement in the Rabi season of 1996. Presently, approximately 23% of country's total present wheat/stocks are available in Punjab and their storage in open is not for lack of storage space but for transit movement and use of covered space for rice.

(d) to (f) Since there was no failure in sending wheat to the deficit States, these questions do not arise.

Indian Evidence Act, 1972

2628. SHRI BHAKTA CHARAN DAS : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any proposal to amend the Indian Evidence Act, 1972;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government propose to enact a new legislation regarding the custodial torture and provision of financial relief to the victims; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?